

The Hawaiian Entomological Society, A Community Asset

By C. E. PEMBERTON

ENTOMOLOGIST, EXPERIMENT STATION, H.S.P.A.

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The virtues of a society organized to promote interest and progress in any field of science, consist primarily in bringing together, at regular intervals, individuals professionally or privately concerned, in keeping a record through the years of their observations and discussions, in publishing this information for its current or future reference value and in encouraging research by its members. With respect to these virtues the Hawaiian Entomological Society has served the community and the Territory particularly well.

Through its regular monthly meetings, the Society has always been strongly instrumental in establishing and maintaining friendly contacts between entomologists in widely diversified kinds of work. Many are engaged in highly specialized subjects and have little opportunity to know what the others are doing or even to become acquainted with them. Our meetings, where free and open discussions on any entomological subject are always welcome and encouraged, bring these workers together and much is gained in many ways. We all have something to give and much to learn from each other. It is undoubtedly true that members have sometimes acquired from papers or discussions at our meetings information or suggestions that materially aid them in the solution of their entomological problems, or hearten them to undertake new investigations.

Because of its geographical position, appealing climate and natural beauty, many prominent entomologists from various parts of the world have visited Hawaii, or have stopped here enroute elsewhere. They often attend our sessions and many of us have, at such times, had the opportunity to meet these men for the first time, resulting in lasting friendships with outstanding individuals whose advice or assistance has been of great help later.

Progress in, or the solution of, any problem in entomology is greatly enhanced if original and succeeding investigators on the same subject publish their data. Even brief notes on some particular subject, if published, can arouse the interest of an ambitious entomologist years later and serve as a basis for an elaborate investigation which may be carried to a point where it becomes of great practical value. This holds particularly true in all taxonomic work and taxonomic work is intensely practical, especially in the field of biological control. Taxonomists are constantly revising, improving and adding to the work of their predecessors, but progress in their particular sphere of interest is entirely

founded on the published opinions, keys and methods of classification of the earlier workers. Without access to such recorded information, they are greatly handicapped. The printed "PROCEEDINGS OF THE HAWAIIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY" have been rich in this respect.

Because of its sub-tropical climate, great isolation and other important but obscure factors, Hawaii offers conditions highly favorable for many exotic insect pests. Its wealth lies in agriculture and the prosperity of its growing population can be maintained only as long as the food crops of the land can be profitably grown. Since the establishment of commerce between the Islands and the outside world, there has been a continuous struggle against immigrant insect pests. Without the intelligent aid from men trained in the science of entomology, it is very doubtful if the Islands could ever have attained their present advanced, cultural and economic state.

This struggle became intensified about the beginning of the twentieth century and both government and industry manifested an increased need for trained entomologists. By the close of 1904 there were eight entomologists professionally employed in the Territory and about seven others were privately interested in entomology. The need to meet and exchange information and thought on Hawaiian entomology prompted this small group to organize the Hawaiian Entomological Society on December 15, 1904, and the first regular meeting was held January 26, 1905. The original membership consisted of fourteen enthusiasts. Meetings were held monthly thereafter. During the ensuing years the general public found increasing needs for entomological service and more entomologists were attracted to Hawaii. The Society continued to grow from year to year until, at present, the membership totals 92 individuals.

There is little that is more stimulating to an entomologist than to meet with contemporary workers and discuss his problems and his discoveries, no matter how unimportant some of them may seem at the time. If his observations are recorded in the minutes at regular meetings of an organized society and his papers filed for publication by the Society, he is still further encouraged to assemble facts of interest and value to his fellow scientists and to the community of which he is a resident. Because the "PROCEEDINGS OF THE HAWAIIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY" have always been carefully edited and published, it has been a source of inspiration to many men who have been members for varying periods during the past forty-five years.

The "PROCEEDINGS" now comprises a total of 6,407 pages, giving in varied detail the results of research by many past or present members of the Society. Within these pages will also be found many important taxonomic and other contributions by noteworthy entomologists outside Hawaii. These papers may deal directly with Hawaiian entomology or pertain to insects in other parts of the world having some bearing on our problems or interests. The Society has come of age and its published "PROCEEDINGS" rate well with the best of the entomological periodicals of the world.

Apart from the many useful papers concerning Hawaiian and Pacific Island insect fauna, a somewhat unique feature of the "PROCEEDINGS"

has been the large number of contributions submitted monthly and printed under the heading "Notes and Exhibitions." These notes cover a wide diversity of subjects such as: the first appearance of an insect in the Territory and its probable origin, new host records, new areas of distribution, seasonal fluctuations, recoveries of rare insects, parasitism records, new introductions of beneficial insects with dates, etc., many insect identifications, crop damage notes, insects and public health, quarantine problems and many others. These contributions and the more technical papers that form the bulk of the printed matter all have, in the last analysis, an economic value. The "PROCEEDINGS," which are carefully indexed, thus discuss in one way or another most of the insects known in the Territory. For reference purposes, they are of the greatest importance to all entomologists in Hawaii and particularly to those employed in agriculture, education or public health.

Without all of these data available for consultation, the entomologist would often be at a loss regarding essential facts needed in advancing some project assigned to him. As a simple example, he might be confronted with an unfamiliar insect that has appeared on an economic plant. If he succeeds in identifying it, he may very well find somewhere in the "PROCEEDINGS" data informing him of its habits, origin, history in Hawaii, whether native or introduced, and leave him in a position to decide almost immediately what action he should take, if any. If no record of it could be found in the "PROCEEDINGS," it could be classed as a new invader until proven otherwise and close attention would be given to the insect to determine its potentialities as a pest at the earliest possible date.

To those of us employed in some form of public service, the "PROCEEDINGS" are invaluable as a handy source of reference in many ways. We are required to answer innumerable questions respecting a great variety of insects. Inquiries come by letter, telephone and in person from residents in all walks of life, seeking the names of insects, their host plants, origin, importance, date of arrival in Hawaii, methods of control, etc., etc. Specimens are often brought to us or sent through the mail with the query "What is it?", and sometimes damaged plants, fabrics, food materials, etc., are submitted without the incriminating insect, but with the expectation that the cause and cure can be immediately supplied. We are sometimes called to homes or consulted by physicians to identify rashes or other marks to the human body caused by mites, possible spiders or the so-called "kissing bug," *Triatoma rubrofasciata* (DeGeer). Few of us, if any, can supply from memory the answers to all such questions. The indexed volumes of the "PROCEEDINGS" will have the answers in a remarkable number of cases. Being published annually, it keeps abreast of the changing times and incorporates much information unobtainable in books that close with the date of publication.

The "PROCEEDINGS" is sent regularly to institutions and individuals in many parts of the world. This establishes and maintains contact with prominent entomologists in various countries, resulting in the exchange of thoughts and published information of practical value. Many entomological journals, periodicals and other papers are received in exchange

for our annual publication, resulting in a considerable saving in subscription costs. They are filed in the H.S.P.A. library and are accessible to all entomologists in the Territory. The extent to which they are consulted bespeaks their usefulness.

Another feature of our Society and its "PROCEEDINGS," self evident but perhaps seldom thought of, is the extent to which it records the pulse or changing status of insect life in Hawaii from year to year, particularly with respect to species of economic importance. This is of special interest where biological control has greatly changed the position maintained by many insects prior to the introduction of beneficial forms. Few of us realize how abundant some insects were in past years and we recognize them today only as casual inhabitants of their natural hosts. Our only evidence of their past importance may sometimes be simple notes which have appeared in our printed "PROCEEDINGS." Great changes in our flora have also profoundly affected many endemic or indigenous species. We can only know this through examination of the published data by the early investigators in Hawaii.

As an example to show how important our "PROCEEDINGS" are in recording facts which should otherwise be lost forever, facts which are vital in support of the belief in the biological method of insect control, a brief note on Page 93, Volume 2, of the "PROCEEDINGS," dated August 5, 1909, under the authorship of D. B. Kuhns, tells of how astonished he was to observe the number of egg masses of the flatid insect *Siphanta acuta* (Walker) attached to the veranda post and walls of a hotel at Wailuku, Maui, and on the leaves of a fern. He reported that almost every batch of eggs showed the exit holes of a parasite. In the "INTRODUCTION OF THE FAUNA HAWAIIENSIS" (1913), R. C. L. Perkins mentioned that in 1900 this insect was so abundant in some of the forests on Oahu that it was actually destroying large numbers of certain native trees and that following the introduction from Australia of an egg parasite *Aphanomerus pusillus* Perk. by him and Albert Koebele, the pest became diminished in numbers in many localities. The parasite was introduced in 1904. Kuhn's observation in 1909 indicated that the parasite had built up in large numbers, but that the pest was still numerous. However, today this Australian pest has become so uncommon in most places in Hawaii that it is infrequently observed, at least in the lowlands, and it is no longer a pest at higher elevations. We thus have a record of the progressive change in the status of this insect, which, if unpublished, would be completely lost, except in the memory of probably only three entomologists now living in Hawaii.

Perhaps no case more strikingly illustrates the value of our "PROCEEDINGS" as a reliable organ in comparing past with present populations of many of our insect species than Dr. Perkins' Presidential Address to the Society on February 8, 1906, which was entitled "The Insects of Tantalus." He discusses a large number of species represented in several orders with interesting comments in most cases on their relative abundance or scarcity. Similar studies today, dealing with the species listed in his paper would undoubtedly show some remarkable changes in the status of many.

For instance, he records seeing the large noctuid moth *Aletia* (*Leucania*) *amblycasis* (Meyr.) "in countless thousands" on Ohia flowers at night on one occasion. Dr. Swezey informs me that this moth is rarely seen any more.

The "PROCEEDINGS" are often indispensable to entomologists in their preparation of various reports and publications. It is hardly possible to study and publish the results of modern research on any of many hundreds of different insects occurring in Hawaii without reference to essential facts published in the "PROCEEDINGS." An excellent example of this is the stupendous task undertaken by E. C. Zimmerman in the preparation of a series of large volumes entitled "Insects of Hawaii." In his preface to the first five volumes, which have been published, he states that "This work has been written to be used in conjunction with the "FAUNA HAWAIIENSIS" and the "PROCEEDINGS OF THE HAWAIIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY." These volumes are rich in reference to data published in the "PROCEEDINGS."

Our Society, with its published "PROCEEDINGS," is thus an asset of the highest order to the community and to the Territory as a whole. Without the published "PROCEEDINGS," the Society could still function but its value to the workers in Hawaii and to many entomologists in the outside world would be reduced to a point where it would be more a social than a scientific society.

In closing, it is gratifying to note the growth in the Society membership. It is constantly expanding and there has been no deterioration in the quality of the papers and other contributions presented at our meetings.

I wish to express great appreciation and thanks to the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association for their continued generosity in supplying annually the major funds required to print our "PROCEEDINGS." Without such support this indispensable publication could not be printed.

Finally, it is a pleasure to pay tribute to our two oldest active members, Dr. O. H. Swezey and Mr. D. T. Fullaway. Though both are professionally retired, they continue to attend our meetings regularly and contribute much that is useful and important in the field of entomology in the Territory.